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778 to taste the flesh of the ndatwa, or long-horned cows who walk in the
262 lead of the sacred herds (inyambo).

This exception to the rule illustrates the importance given to the cows in that category.

In order to make sure that this prohibition is heeded, the
[278] keepers allow the rumor to spread that crocodile blood (ingona), which is regarded as a dangerous poison, is used to rub the favorite cows (indatwa). /511/

III. Exhibition of the Objects in the Royal Treasure

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543 Let us mention further that on the occasion of those two important solemnities, the objects in the royal treasure (intore) are exhibited. They include beads of all kinds, necklaces, bracelets, fabrics, small carved bones (intimba), and elaborately worked colobus pelts (inkomo). It seems that prior to the Ruchunchu disaster (1896), when most of the pieces belonging to the famous treasure disappeared in the flames, the collection was so outstanding for its (strictly indigenous) richness and variety that it could hardly be enumerated. It had to be replaced piece by piece.

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543 Only a few colobus pelts and a few lengths of fabric survived the disaster. The most ancient "loincloths" harked back to King Gahindiro whose reign must have ended somewhere between 1840 and 1850! They had been preserved all along with zealous care, for they were regarded as very valuable for the period.

They were designated by the name of impwijima, owing to the character of the striped and streaked fabric.

[648] The kings of Ruanda had obtained them through the good offices of the princes of the Karagwe and Usui, with whom they had entertained amicable relations from time immemorial.

Frequent exchanges of brides from court to court were instrumental in maintaining a certain amity between them. It will be recalled that Ruganzu ran away to his paternal aunt, Nyirabunyana, wife of the potentate of theKaragwe, who was then Ndagara and who had succeeded a certain Luhinda. Because of their proximity to

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292 Lake Victoria, the kings of the Karagwe and especially those of the Usui were among the first to establish contact with the Arabs and to receive fabrics from them. Their Ruanda friends benefitted from this. Since those garments were few, /the kings/ alone wore them, and they were also given /512/ the name of imyambarabami, "the king's vestments." Upon the death of a king his garments were put away and became part of the treasure. Although they wore cloth from that time onward, the kings of Ruanda did not forsake the national costume called by the name of inkindi and made of one or two colobus pelts (inkomo), well tanned and elaborately worked. Those pelts were collected and entrusted to the keepers of the treasure (abanyabyuma), trustworthy men who were preferably chosen among chiefs or the prince's favorites. Those employees had to see to it that the belongings of dead kings were properly cared for. Those garments were beginning to pile up in the wardrobe when the revolution which overthrew King Mibambge-Rutalindwa, appointed successor of Lwabugiri-Kigeri, broke out.

The fire which consumed the huts where the royal furnishings had been stored destroyed practically everything.

It has since been attempted to build up a new treasure by choosing new lengths of fabric bought from merchants, this being now an easy proposition.

Colobus pelts were tanned to replace the old ones. The present king has secured beads, bracelets, necklaces, etc., of various sorts. They are faithfully displayed with great solemnity before the royal hut, which stands at the heart /fond/ of the first outer courtyard, at the time of the two great festivals.

It should not be assumed that this is mere ostentation, a simple display of riches.

Of course, the kings are far from insensitive to this vainglorious exhibit of antiquated frippery and trinkets, which to them were
543 supreme artistic riches. This, however, was not all. This display
769 also had the purpose of gaining the good graces of dead princes. To this end, several individuals were selected among those present to recall their memory. They were made to dress in the old or new colobus pelts /513/ which had belonged, or were supposed to have

543 belonged, to the deceased monarchs. Then they danced in honor of
769 the "spirits" of dead kings on the grounds before the king's house. While moving about, they repeated in unison, "These are your treasures (intore), those that belonged to you. They are truly yours, those garments, those fabrics, those weapons, those beads, etc. It is in your name that we carry out these celebrations. We always remain your subjects, your lieges, your servants"....

(Tor' ibintu byawe, intore zawe; n' ibirori byawe, n'abagaragu bawe....) When the ceremony is over, the keepers of the treasure store the objects away until the following festival (1).

1. Among the original pieces included in the royal museum, there is the garment (inkindi) of the king of Urundi, Mutaga, who was killed in battle near Mwurire hill in the province of Bwana-Mkali. It is a hide, since no other garments were worn at that time, and it is altered almost beyond recognition in spite of the rancid butter with which it is constantly rubbed to preserve it. It is one of the rare trophies of victory that survived the fire caused by the Ruchunchu disaster. It is called by the name of ntizihishw' amabuno, that is to say, "that (garment) which is too short (for size)." The native expression is stronger and shows that the Banyarwanda wit never flags in situations tragic or comic.

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769 The festivals and celebrations are almost invariably of a sacrificial character in the sense that the ancestral spirits are commemorated and are offered gifts in a fictitious or even a real fashion, as we shall see in the pages that follow. We shall discuss funeral
766 customs or, more exactly, those that apply to the death of the king,